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Executive summary

The following paper is a synopsis of UNDP's activities and initiatives involving indigenous peoples over the last year. The paper also includes the policy framework, which guides UNDP's engagement with indigenous peoples. In addition, it responds to the recommendations addressed to UNDP in the areas of economic and social development and environment.

Policy Framework

1. The lessons learned from country and regional engagement together with global consultations with indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs) fed into and informed UNDP's policy entitled: **UNDP and Indigenous Peoples: A Policy of Engagement.** Underpinned by the international human rights framework, the policy recognizes indigenous peoples' rights and their vital role and contribution to development.

2. The objective of the policy is to provide UNDP staff with a framework to guide their work in building sustainable partnerships with indigenous peoples. These partnerships are aimed at fostering an enabling environment that: promotes indigenous peoples' participation in all decision-making levels; ensures the co-existence of their economic, cultural, and socio-political systems with others; and develops the capacity of governments to build more inclusive policies and programmes. The policy establishes priority areas of engagement ranging from poverty to issues related to ownership and use of land and natural resources; protection of cultural and intellectual property; and participation in political processes. The policy provides practical mechanisms for operational and policy engagement at the global, regional and country levels.

3. The rationale for UNDP engagement with indigenous peoples and their organizations is grounded in the UNDP mandated areas of work; processes and agreements of development cooperation; and the aspirations of indigenous peoples. The UNDP coordinating role at the country level, its human development paradigm, advocacy of democratic governance, and policy of mainstreaming human rights positions makes it a key partner for pursuing a more holistic approach to development. Moreover, the UNDP country and regional presence and the relationship of trust it has with governments and civil society partners enables UNDP to play a unique role in bringing together different stakeholders in development processes. This mandate can serve as a critical entry point and foundation for supporting more inclusive development policies and programmes; brokering dialogues with all actors; facilitating participatory approaches; and creating the political space for alternative views to be shared.

Response to recommendations addressed exclusively to UNDP

4. ***Economic and Social Development.*** In 2003 UNDP contributed to the Permanent Forum's Voluntary Fund. In view of the Forum's recommendations the funds were earmarked for activities related to initiatives focusing on data collection and the principle of free prior and informed consent. As part of its contribution to the workshop on data collection and disaggregation for indigenous peoples held in New York, 19-21 of January 2004 and organized by the Secretariat, UNDP's CSO Division together with the Human Development Report Office has prepared a paper addressing this issue vis-à-vis the National Human Development Reports and the MDG national progress reports.

Millennium Development Goals

5. UNDP recognizes that the MDGs can provide an overall framework for furthering indigenous peoples' development. In this regard, UNDP organized the regional workshop entitled "*Learning from Community Action to Realize the MDGs: Biodiversity and HIV/AIDS*," held in Nairobi, Kenya, July 13-18, 2003. The workshop (the first in a planned series in different regions) aimed to increase understanding and awareness of the importance of local community action to achieve the MDGs. More than 100 representatives of grassroots, community based, non-governmental and indigenous peoples' organizations and local governments from 11 countries in Africa shared experiences and forged partnerships to conserve biodiversity and combat HIV/AIDS. The participants discussed strategies to improve food security and water and land management and sustain the environment while promoting development.

6. The workshop produced 40 learning exchange agreements. These agreements between local communities are aimed at encouraging concrete partnerships. The agreements facilitate the exchange of knowledge and instructive practice from one community to another. Many of these agreements are supporting exchanges among indigenous peoples' communities. UNDP earmarked funds towards implementing the agreements.

7. At the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 7) held in Malaysia in February 2004. UNDP organized the Community Kampung, a community dialogue space. The Community Kampung focused on highlighting the importance of local community action to biodiversity conservation and achievement of the MDGs. Poverty-environment linkages were a central theme, as were the issues of social inclusion, participation and gender equity. Other principal themes explored in the Kampung included the nexus of people and protected areas, community leadership in conservation area planning and management, the role of indigenous and mobile peoples in conservation, poverty eradication and eco-agriculture. A full day was dedicated to discussing indigenous peoples' issues related to biodiversity.

8. Furthermore, the Equator Initiative awards were given at COP7. Of the 26 community group finalists that exemplify extraordinary achievement in reducing poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Equatorial belt, 12 are indigenous peoples' communities. And of the 7 awardees 3 are indigenous peoples.

9. Over the last year, UNDP has also established the Community-Based Initiative. The CBI is a working group set up to promote deeper interaction between UNDP and Community organizations to realize the MDGs. The goal is to learn from community action to advance the MDGs. A set of regional workshops has been planned in 2004 to engage communities in the MDGs and further South-South cooperation. CBI involves a number of UNDP divisions including Capacity 2015, Civil Society Organizations Division, the Energy and Environment Group, the Equator Initiative, GEF Small Grants Programme, LIFE, the SURFs, and Regional Bureaux.

Response to recommendations addressed exclusively to one or more agencies

10. *Economic and Social Development.* UNDP is an active member of the Interagency Support Group to the Forum aimed at supporting the Forum and taking forward its recommendations. UNDP will be hosting the next Inter-Agency Support Group meeting this coming September. This year UNDP has also taken the lead in preparing an interagency paper on free prior and informed consent and its importance in development programming and planning.

11. *Environment.* UNDP's Energy and Environment Group together with the Global Environment Facility have taken the lead in developing an internal Practice Note on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) and Traditional Knowledge (TK). The Practice Note describes why and how UNDP can support countries and communities in developing national policy frameworks and in designing specific projects aimed at protecting and sharing TK. It reviews who holds rights to TK and the terms under which the right to this knowledge can be shared. The note outlines how the existing legal instruments on intellectual property rights, with a particular emphasis on patents, could be used for the protection of TK and for equitable ABS, adding recommendations for elements that should or could be added to better protect TK and better ensure ABS. The work in this area also provides UNDP with a means of advancing its policy of engagement with indigenous peoples, and of building upon its support for systems that encourage indigenous knowledge and practices. Women are often the ones holding TK and passing it on to younger generations. By promoting the value of TK, UNDP can enhance the role and importance of women in local communities and among indigenous peoples.

Policy Implementation and Project Development

12. In September 2003, UNDP launched the ***Regional Initiative on Strengthening Policy Dialogue on Indigenous, Highland and Tribal Peoples' Rights and Development*** (RIPP). The objectives of the project are to strengthen the policy dialogue and coordination on Indigenous, Highland and Tribal Peoples' rights and sustainable development at all levels. In line with this, the project aims to enhance inter-country sharing of experiences on priority issues, particularly with regard to reducing the incidence of poverty among indigenous peoples. It further aims to build capacity among all stakeholders, strengthen information networks and knowledge management systems particularly among indigenous peoples, to support their full and effective participation in policy dialogue at all levels. Through an extensive consultation process involving all relevant stakeholders, the following three issues were identified as priority areas to be tackled: Natural Resource Management; Land and Resource Rights; and Indigenous Knowledge, Culture and Education. The project will be led from Thailand and the participating countries include Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

13. The **Human Rights Strengthening Programme** (HURIST), a joint initiative between UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), launched its initial workshop in March 2004. The workshop aimed at discussing the framework for an indigenous peoples project in Ecuador. The overall aim of the project is to establish a forum for

dialogue between the government and indigenous peoples' organizations. Another pilot is planned for Kenya.

14. Furthermore, the CSO Division in partnership with the Regional Programme of Latin America and the Caribbean has undertaken a mapping of the region's country office activities involving indigenous peoples. The mapping provides brief descriptions of key projects with an indigenous peoples' component. The intention of the mapping is to assess the kind of work taking place with indigenous peoples in the field and to identify possible next steps of further engagement at the regional level.

15. These new initiatives combined with ongoing activities at the national level, and with the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, for example, are designed to address the needs of local communities and provide a range of channels for UNDP support to indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Women

16. In Latin America a number of examples emerge that highlight UNDP's engagement with indigenous women at the country level. Projects range from support to the establishment of the Indigenous Women Ombudsman Office contributing to the education of indigenous women in Law and Social Sciences in Guatemala to support to an international forum on indigenous women in El Salvador to the development of the Women's National Forum as part of a project on empowering women in the peace accord in Guatemala.

Publications

17. *Partners in Human Development*, our latest report on partnerships with civil society organizations (October 2003), highlights the many dimensions of UNDP engagement with civil society organizations throughout our thematic areas. The 32 examples of UNDP partnerships with civil society organizations in this report are drawn from country experience in four thematic areas – poverty reduction, environmental management and sustainable development, conflict prevention, peace building and recovery, and HIV/AIDS. The report includes many country examples of UNDP engagement with indigenous peoples, particularly in the area of conflict prevention and peace building.

18. *Case studies* UNDP has commissioned a set of case studies aimed at documenting the role of indigenous peoples and their organizations in conflict prevention and resolution. A UNDP publication of the 11 case studies 7 of which are in Latin America will be forthcoming and launched at the Forum in Barcelona in September. The work has been coordinated by our two members of the CSO Advisory Committee working closely on indigenous peoples' issues.